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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS,
U.S. ARMS PROCUREMENTS

Summary: Major Chinese-language Taipei dailies continued to focus their coverage September 30 on local politics and local scandals, but an opinion piece ran in the centrist "China Times" commenting on U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Robert Zoellick's recent remarks in New York. The op-ed said Zoellick's new definition for Washington-Beijing relations has found a new 'stakeholder relationship' - namely: peace, dialogue, responsibility - for the triangular relationship between Washington, Beijing and Taipei. An editorial and an opinion piece in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" both commented on U.S. Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Richard Lawless' recent speech on Taiwan's blocked arms procurement bill. The editorial urged Washington to be more creative in helping to resolve the stuck arms deal, while the opinion piece said Lawless' warning on the arms bill was unhelpful for reconciling the different perspectives of the pan-blue and pan-green camps and will make future Washington-Taipei ties even more complicated. End summary.

1. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

"The New Stakeholder Relationship between the United States, China and Taiwan"

Wu Rei-kuo, Deputy Executive Chief of the Cross-Strait Interflow Prospect Foundation, commented in the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (9/30):

". The remarks [by U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Robert Zoellick at the National Committee on United States-China Relations in New York] indirectly revealed two major changes the Bush administration has adopted in its second term of office in dealing with international affairs:

"First, the United States will gradually abandon its 'unilateralism' practices and will expand the community foundation for sharing and maintaining the international order. Washington's self-willed reconstruction efforts in the post-war Iraq, including the matter of whether U.S. soldiers will be able to 'withdraw [from Iraq] safely and gracefully,' have created irremediable damage [to its foreign relations], especially its rifts with the European Union. The recently concluded 'Six-Party Talks' and Washington's approach of asking the UN Security Council to step in to handle Iran's nuclear energy development have all indicated that the United States may be able to launch a war independently, but it is certainly incapable of bringing peace [to the world] single-handedly.

"Second, the United States will promote a new set of 'behavior guidelines' in the international community, which will serve as a criteria for [more countries] to share international responsibilities. .

"The afore-mentioned policy changes will have a direct and immediate impact on the situation in the Taiwan Strait:

"First, [Washington] will ensure 'peace' in the Taiwan Strait: The core question concerning both sides of the Taiwan Strait is no longer 'how to reunify or whether [Taiwan] can declare independence' but how to 'maintain the status quo and guarantee peace.' Unless Taiwan declares independence or foreign forces evidently step in the cross-strait situation plainly, chances for China to use force against Taiwan have reduced significantly or even died out in the wake of the newly defined 'responsible stakeholder' relationship between Washington and Beijing. Same for the possibility if Taiwan declares independence.

"Second, the cross-strait issues have gradually turned 'internationalized: . a consensus will be gradually formed among those countries or international organizations who are concerned about peace in the

Taiwan Strait that disputes may be worked out via 'multilateral participation' in the future. Third, the pressure on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to resume dialogue will be 'systemized': . under the knowledge that 'dialogue is not tantamount to consensus,' pressure from the international community will force Beijing and Taipei to look into the necessity of resuming dialogue.

"The new definition for Washington-Beijing relations has found a new 'stakeholder relationship' - namely, peace, dialogue, responsibility - for the scalene triangular relationship between Washington, Beijing and Taipei. If such a move was interpreted by some as a way for Washington to restrict or even to dominate the cross-Strait situation, it can also be viewed as a choice the United States cannot help but make in the face of a rapidly rising China. ."

12. U.S. Arms Procurement

A) "US Must Alter Its Approach"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (9/30):

"A new pastime for US officials is to slam Taiwan over the repeated failure of the special arms procurement budget bill to pass. It is understandable that Taiwan's supporters in the US should be frustrated over the pan-blue camp's efforts to thwart this important piece of legislation. But simply giving Taiwanese politicians a tongue-lashing is not enough to make this issue move forward, and indeed, only exacerbates the problem.

"The US must take concrete action to help resolve this issue. That can happen with two simple steps.

"The first step is to deny visas to prominent politicians who oppose the arms deal. .Washington must be resolved in demonstrating to the people of Taiwan that undermining US-Taiwan relations has consequences. But this needn't come at the expense of Taiwan itself - it should be those responsible for weakening US-Taiwan relations that pay a price. . The pan-blues will get the message pretty quickly, but more importantly, so will the people of Taiwan.

"The next step that Washington should take is very easy, and very specific. The US Department of Defense should abandon the nave policy guideline implemented by former deputy secretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz in 2003 that prevents Taiwan from helping to build the eight diesel-electric submarines that are in the special budget. Until legislators have a tangible reason to support the procurement, they will oppose it. There are too many ideological issues involved for the bill to pass in its current form. But as soon as lawmakers see that their constituents will be getting jobs and their backers contracts from the deal, it will begin to move forward. .

"The point of all of this is that the US must be more creative when it addresses Taiwan's domestic political situation. Having congressmen or bureaucrats shout and stomp their feet with frustration is ineffective, to put it charitably. When US officials place blame anywhere - no matter how vaguely that blame is place - it only gives local lawmakers sticks with which to beat each other, furthering the divisiveness in Taiwan's fledgling democracy.

"And that is the key point. Taiwan has been a true democracy for less than a decade. There are major deficiencies in the current system of government, some of which will take many years to address. But the US has a responsibility - both in terms of realpolitik and ideology - to ensure that Taiwan's democracy is secure. To do this, it must first understand the situation clearly, and then take considered action which fits into an overall strategy for Taiwan. ."

B) "US Warnings on Arms Bill Unhelpful"

Philip Yang, associate professor of political science at National Taiwan University, wrote in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (9/30):

"The Pentagon's dissatisfaction with delays over the arms procurement bill has led it to voice inappropriate criticism, saying basically that if Taiwan does not buy weapons to defend itself, then the US has no obligation to defend us. .

"The development of Taiwan's democracy, the dramatic changes in the cross-strait relationship and relations with the US, and the impact of China's `rising' mean that Taiwan's purchase of arms from the US is not a simple military problem, but is a complex issue that is critical to the security of the Taiwan Strait and the relationship between Taiwan, the US and China. .

"The threats now coming from the US regarding Taiwan's inability to pass the arms procurement bill will not only not help reconcile the different perspectives of the two political camps, but will make future relations between Taiwan and the US even more complex. .

"Because of the current political climate, propaganda far outweighs reasoned argument, so it seems likely that the proposed arms procurement bill, among other political decisions, must await an election for a final resolution."

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